

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Maria Carolina Monterrosa
Project title	Understanding the relationship between abiotic factors and hatchling success of <i>Dermochelys coriacea</i> in Tayrona National Park.
RSG reference	39.11.08
Reporting period	May-August 2009
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	monterrosac@gmail.com
Date of this report	10.09.09

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
To continue the monitoring and tagging program			X	During the development of the project, the only nesting female in the area was tagged as well as one not nesting female. These results strengthen the high value of night patrols and are an extra step in the knowledge of this reduced nesting population.
To measure physical factors affecting the nest environment (humidity, water table level, temperature)			X	The most interesting and important fact was to realize that the methodology works in a way that will allow compare physical and biological data when these exist.
To establish the influence of these physical factors in the development of the embryos and hatchling success	X			This season there were not leatherback's nests in the project's impact area, so was impossible to establish real relationships between the abiotic factors obtained and the hatchling success. Nevertheless, the results were analyzed according with the specie's bibliography for the Grand Caribbean Region, giving the national authorities the comparisons and knowledge they would be able to obtain if the next year they repeat the research,

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

Well, we knew the leatherback's nesting activity inside this area had a declining tendency but we never expected not to have any nest. So, we decided make an approach to the oldest inhabitants in the area in order to try to understand the reasons for the actual conservation status. This fact, give us so much information about the situation and was one of the most valuable experience in our research walk. In the other hand, the abiotic data obtained during the project was used to make a detailed analysis respect to its biological implications, which we hope the authorities have in mind for the next years conservation work.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

To continue the night patrols: Definitely, be able to continue the night patrols inside the area, is the only way to know the remains of this nesting population and have the right information to ask the authorities to take control over the human pressures present in the beaches at this time. In the same

way, our presence discourages the use of white light and noisy activities protecting the few nesting females active in these beaches.

To continue the tagging programme: Since the beginning of our work in Tayrona, one of our most valuable activities has been the sea turtle tagging programme, and this year nevertheless the low turtle's activity, the two females that arrived to Arrecifes area during the night patrols were tagged, adding two more females to the Tayrona data base.

To involve the youngest people: After these three years, the children inside the area make a close relation with Colombia Marina Staff, and now they really understand how much they can help to protect the turtles and the hatchlings. They want to be an active part in the process for the coming years, and Colombia Marina would be there if they need it.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

The local community have been a great support for us inside the area. They have told us their stories about past tenses and how they know they are in part responsible for the actual sea turtles situation. So, the new generations, have been active part in the conservation process, they enjoy with us some nights during the night patrols. This year, Colombia Marina made a video for them, showing the different species, their beaches and asking their help for protect them.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

After the low activity observed this year, Colombia Marina has been so honest with the park authorities on the difficulty of obtain international support to continue the process. Nevertheless we show them the great responsibility that now is only in their hands and we offer all our help and availabilities in everything we could help, so if they decide to continue the work, we will be with them.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

Colombia Marina will send the final report to others NGO working in conservation inside protected areas and to national authorities related with sea turtles. In the same way, when we finished the project, we had a workshop with the park staff (park rangers, professionals and directors) explaining the results and the actual situation for the resource inside the area. Thinking on strength the children appropriation, Colombia Marina made a video with images and sentences about Tayrona sea turtles conservation, giving them a tool for tourists and inhabitants' awareness.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The grant was used from May 14th to July 30th. The anticipated schedule planned to begin in March and finished on the first days of August, but the grant was received on May and the turtles activities was too low, that after a month of not turtles registers, the field work was finished the last week of July and the research team decided to finish the work and begin the information analysis and final report elaboration.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Subsistence payments	£590	£590	£0	
Equipment	£900	£860	£40	We save some money buying the humidity sensors directly from the manufacturer
Field supplies	£0	£0	£0	
Office supplies	£98	£98	£0	
Travel / transport	£4150	£4030	£120	Also, some money was saved using cheaper local transportation near the field work area.
Dissemination expenses	£254	£254	£0	The remaining money (£160) was used to increase the dissemination activities in the area.
TOTAL	£5992	£5832	£160	

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

For us, it is important to support the National Authorities decisions inside the areas giving them all the scientific and conservation advices to succeed in the long way. For our part, Colombia Marina will begin a conservation based community process in Tayrona National Park buffer zone, where during these three years we have had an approach with a fishermen committee interested in sea turtles protection. We hope be able to help this people with their interest and begin the first project of this class in the country. Protecting the females and hatchling of this beach, we will contribute to the area's nesting population, so in Tayrona National Park, will feel the results too.

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes, in the conservation video, the workshops and final reports documents and presentations we used the RSGF logo, and all the documents have our recognition.

11. Any other comments?

Thanks. Without your support would be impossible show the national authorities the actual sea turtles situation inside the area, and their commitment would take so much time being what it is at this moment. During these research years, we have realized how much we have to do for these endangered species in the Magdalena area and we had identified the way to do so, we hope get it.